

Maybe if we have been more vigilant with COVID precautions...?

December 21, 2023 by Shay



If you've followed me on other platforms or social media, you might already know this. But if not: I'm one of the shrinking numbers of people who haven't gotten COVID yet. It's not because I have some sort of wondrous immune system. No, I got sick plenty over the years when my kids were in school bringing home germs. I have allergies up the whazoo.

But I still mask.

The fact I've dodged COVID this long tells me that has been a wise choice.

I know it's not popular. I know the vast majority of people got sick of masking and still refrain even when new nasty strains of COVID appear. I know public health officials have told us it isn't "necessary" anymore. Most of the time when I'm in public places, though, I stay masked.

As many people who masked during the pandemic will tell you, they were sick a lot less often. Masking does reduce the risks of catching those airborne viruses.

I've seen too many people in my close circles and more distant ones struggle with long COVID. I've seen the effects that multiple infections have had on people. COVID has long-term effects far beyond anything we see with the flu, no matter how often people want to compare the two and say "it's just another kind of flu" and say that COVID isn't a threat anymore. We don't know how persistent those lingering health effects will be—permanent maybe? I'm not eager to find out any sooner than I have to.

But what has me wondering even more how much we could have done to keep COVID from being such a menace and killing or debilitating so many people is this: Two strains of flu have [dropped off the radar](#) since the pandemic masking rules went into effect at the peak of the pandemic.

Coincidence?

I think not. I think (and so do a lot of experts looking at this) that masking helped [drive those two strains underground](#). How much more could we have done if we had all just kept masking? It's not attractive, but it's not that hard. No matter how many people say you can't breathe well enough in masks, surgeons and professional painters and mold and lead removers and more do it for hours on end as part of their job.

Are these two strains gone forever? Are they extinct. Maybe not; [the results aren't](#)

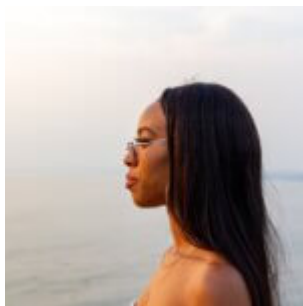
yet conclusive. But even the fact that they have gone for now tells me that we should have taken masking more seriously, and that we still should until COVID really isn't killing people and hospitalizing them and debilitating them in ways the flu doesn't. It's probably too late now to do any massive good against the COVID we let run rampant. We should have done more with masks, vaccines, and more. We can't turn back the clock. But in the meantime, I'll be masking for a long time to come.

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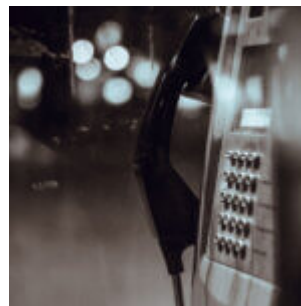
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